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Moody's upgrades ratings of Aruba Airport Authority to Baa2

Sustained improvement in operational and financial metrics supported by increasing pax traffic over the past few years

ORANJESTAD- On April 10, 2012 Credit Rating Agency Moody's announced that it has upgraded the rating of the Aruba Airport Authority N.V. from Baa3 to Baa2. Moody's last rating of AAA dated from January 26, 2012, when AAA's Baa3 rating was placed under review for possible upgrade. This review has now lead to AAA's upgrading.

In Moody's several rating categories, it has rated AAA under the so called Government Related Issuer (GRI) methodology which combines



the Baseline Credit Assessment (AAA's stand-alone credit quality) with the assessment of AAA's correlation with the Government of Aruba, AAA's sole shareholder. Moody's notes that AAA's credit quality is substantially constrained by its view of the Government of Aruba's own credit quality.

In Moody's analysis AAA's dependence on the tourism sector, possible developments in Venezuela (comprising 12% of the traffic), the possible introduction of a tourism levy that could negatively impact the cost competitiveness of the airport and the Government of Aruba's request to pay divi-

dends after meeting the bond covenants are mentioned as challenges that AAA is facing.

In the same analysis Moody's mentions the co-operation agreement with Schiphol as one of AAA's keys strengths and one of the drivers that lead to the upgrade of AAA's rating. According to Moody's the agreement with the A1/Stable rated Schiphol helps operational and management efficiencies. Other rating drivers that are being mentioned are the fact that the traffic proved relatively resilient to the global economic recession, a diversified airline base,

Zimmerman charged with second degree murder

JACKSONVILLE, Florida - The neighborhood watch volunteer who shot dead an unarmed US black teen in Florida in February was charged yesterday.

The special prosecutor in the case, Angela Corey, announced yesterday that George Zimmerman was charged with second-degree murder in the fatal shooting of 17-year-old Trayvon Martin.

The Martin case has sparked a national uproar about race relations and the

right to self-defense in the United States.

A controversial Florida law allows the use of deadly force when a person senses a reasonable fear that he is in danger of being killed or of serious injury.

Zimmerman -- who has not been seen in public since the shooting -- is Hispanic. On Tuesday, his attorneys withdrew from the case, saying they had lost contact with him.

Martin's family and supporters say the teen may have

been the victim of racial profiling, and killed in cold blood.

Zimmerman's supporters have countered that Martin attacked first, breaking Zimmerman's nose before knocking him to the ground and repeatedly slamming his head against the sidewalk. They insist Zimmerman fired in self-defense.

Zimmerman's new attorney, Mark O'Mara, reported that Zimmerman has surrendered yesterday to the Florida Department of Law Enforcement.

Changes in bus stops in the Wilhelminastraat

Arubus informs that, due to the reconstruction of the road, the different bus stops in the Wilhelminastraat will be temporarily moved to the Adrian Lacle Blvd, as shown below.

Management of Arubus apologizes for this inconvenience

See story on page 3

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Bounty on Boas being offered by Arikok Park from April 16 to May 16



Differences in markings between santinero and boa

A wanted poster is making the rounds of island media, as the call goes out from rangers and management of the Arikok National Park that a bounty has been placed on boa constrictors, an invasive species not native to the island, which is seriously endangering indigenous wildlife.

A few organized hunts have taken place, but the results



Boa have a double row of teeth to hold their prey



Distinctive markings of the boa tail

have not been encouraging; now the park, through sponsorship from Fantastic Gardens, La Cabana Beach Resort and Iguana Joe's restaurant are offering 10 Aruban florins, (\$5.57) per live boa turned into their headquarters at the park entrance. The period of paid collection begins on Monday, April 16 and will end on Wednesday, May 16.

During that time, those that

have trapped and bagged live boas can turn them to Park Rangers Salvador Franken and Agapito Gomez. There will be a final accounting with first, second and third place prizes awarded to those who have brought in the great number of boas, the runner-up, and for the largest snake captured.

Exactly when and how the species was first introduced to Aruba is unknown, but in a few years they have proliferated at

an alarming rate, giving live birth to up to 64 young at one time; there are no native animals which threaten even the new born boas. The largest found on Aruba so far measures 2.9 meters, nearly 10 ft long.

Rangers Franken and Gomez demonstrated to media the differences between the boa and one of Aruba's endemic snakes, the Santanero, or Aruban Cat-eyed Snake, which is typically less than 50 cm long. The Santanero is a vital part of Aruba's eco-system, helping to control mice and other vermin, and snake hunters are warned not to harm them. Homeowners that find them in their yards are also asked to leave them alone. The public is reminded to take note of the differences between the boa and the Santanero, as well as the native Aruban Cascabal, or rattlesnake, which is an endangered species.

Continued on page 4

Aruba Hospital offers new Guidance Sessions for future mothers



ORANJESTAD -- The Aruba Dr. Horacio E. Oduber Hospital has organized for one consecutive year guidance information sessions for future mothers. These sessions have become very popular among future parents from the Delivery and Maternity Departments of the Hospital. These sessions are completely gratis and are held in the Conference Room of the Hospital from 7:00 am.

This month, April, the sessions will be held on the 18th and 20th. Here future mothers will receive information concerning delivery and breast feeding. The future mothers will also be given a tour of the different relevant departments, and much more.

Among some of the information will be: what is a nor-

mal delivery and what steps must be taken in the event of delivery complications. They will also receive information about the Delivery Room of the Hospital. On the second day of the information sessions they will focus on the Maternity Department, breast feeding as well as a tour of the Maternity Department. Every month the Hospital invites different speakers who address interesting topics with these future mothers.

All future mothers, fathers and family members interested in receiving this kind of information are invited to attend these sessions. Contact the Maternity Unit between Monday to Friday from, 8:00am to 2:00pm at number 527-4464 and plan on participation on the 18th and 20th of April.



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Changes in Arubus public transport routes

ORANJESTAD -- Aruba's public transportation system, ARUBUS hereby announces several changes to take effect immediately.

Due to construction work taking place on Avenida Milio Croes, at the old Kooyman building, this section of the road has been closed to traffic for reconstruction. Hence, Arubus is compelled to change the routes to accommodate bus users.

Instead of travelling down Avenida Milio Croes, the bus will enter Bazinstraat (Shabby Shic), make a right turn and enter Victor Hugostraat and head down to Vondelaan to exit. Once travelling on Vondelaan, the bus will make a left turn and get on Alfred de Mussetstraat, and continue on to the T-crossing then make a

right onto Byronstraat. Then Arubus will make a left turn and get on Sweelinkstraat up to the crossroad, then turn right and get on Adrian Lacle Boulevard. From Adrian Lacle Boulevard, the bus will continue on to Wilhelminastraat where they will make a left turn and continue on to the central busstation in Oranjestad.

For the way back from the central bus station, the bus will travel its normal route up to the crossroad at Wilhelminastraat and Adrian Lacle Boulevard. At Adrian Lacle Boulevard Arubus will continue on to Sweelinkstraat with the route mentioned above.

Arubus kindly request all bus users who are accustomed to waiting for the bus at the Wilhelminastraat near Elmar

and at Banco di Caribe, to take special note of the changes as the buses will no longer be passing on these roads while the construction is underway. The new bus stops will be on the Adrian Lacle Boulevard a little ahead of the crossing of Sweelinkstraat and Adrian Lacle Boulevard. This is the most convenient spot for the busses to wait for passengers to climb on board and to let off passengers.

Management of Arubus expresses their apologies for the

inconvenience these changes have made on our bus users. They ask for everyone's under-

standing and patience for this situation that is completely beyond their control.



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Let's help Santa Rosa with our fruit seeds and small fruit trees



Papaya

The government just recently initiated a project for planting some 10 thousand fruit trees all across the island. This ambitious project was initiated in cooperation with the FCCA housing complex in south Cura Cabay. In Cura Cabay they intend to plant 100 different fruit trees which Santa Rosa will water and care for until they are fully developed.

After announcing this Project, Santa Rosa received a long list of requests from different schools on the island who want to be incorporated into the plan and have fruit trees planted. Santa Rosa considers the requests for planting fruit trees at our schools very important as this motivates our



Mango

children to also become involved in such a noble activity for the next generation.

One of the aspects of this massive project is the preparation of the trees. In the past, Santa Rosa used imported seeds that were less expensive, especially for the vegetables. These were genetically changed seeds. However, the government is insisting this time that only organic seeds be used so that the community gets only purely natural fruit (organic). This will require the cooperation of the entire Aruban community.



Banana

Santa Rosa is appealing to the community, to those who may have fruit trees in their yard, to save the seeds that they can use for this project. Everyone should cooperate and save their seeds for Santa Rosa. This will help considerably in ensuring that there would be enough plants for all our schools and the rest of the community.

All the plants collected by Santa Rosa from the community will be used only for this Project. These plants will not be for re-sale. For those wanting to purchase fruit trees from Santa Rosa, they have imported plants for this pur-



Soursof

pose.

With respect to water for the fruit planting Project, together with the government they are planning for a Reverse Osmosis Machine equipped with filtered ultra violet lights which would be installed at the purification plant at RWZI. An official protocol exists since 2010 for Santa Rosa to have access to the water at RWZI. The water at the purification water plant would be used for the planting of all trees and grazing grass around the island, and to help our livestock farmers.



Cashew fruit

To help Santa Rosa with fruit seeds, and seeds for vegetables and with small fruit trees, please call Tel. 585-8102 and ask for Glenda Bareno or Jessica Wernet to coordinate the information and Santa Rosa will take care of collecting whatever you have to help. It is also possible to go by and bring whatever you have personally.

Bounty on Boas . . .

Continued from page 2

The proliferation of boas over the past 10 years is causing quite some concern to conservationists. A scientific team from Texas did an extensive study as to how they are impacting the local wildlife, and it is estimated that local population of an estimated 2000+ boas consumes 52,000 indigenous species annually, which is divided in thirds by birds, mammals and reptiles. 100 boas were caught in January of this year, but staff of the Aruba Boa Task Force assume for every boa found there are at least another 4 in the bush.

Boas can be turned in to the park office daily from 10:00 AM until 3:00 PM. An information night to acquaint poten-



Boa placentalsacs

tial hunters with techniques for bagging and tagging will be conducted soon at a date yet to be announced. For more information contact Salvador Franken at 592-0778.

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New Court Edifice gets new completion date!



ORANJESTAD -- After quite some turbulence, finally the restauration and expansion of the Aruba Court House Building has begun to run a positive course. The project, reportedly, is part of the integral BoAruba plan for the improvement of the quality of Aruba. At the outset, the building project met with different problems, but those are now matters of the past.

The Monumental Office is in charge of the supervision of the Court House building project. Yvonne Webb, person in charge, indicated that everyone can see that the project is taking shape, both the new section as well as the inside area.

This government sponsored project, consists of two sections. One section is an entirely new infrastructure, and the other section is the restauration of the old historic edifice. The section being restaured is advancing rapidly; they have already begun laying the floor tiles. A lot of the work is concentrated on the interior of this section which most people cannot see.

In a meeting with the architects, they decided to allow

sufficient time for several aspects of the work that had to be investigated before they could have continued. For example, they discovered a cistern in the monumental section of the building, which they had to incorporate into the new project, according to Yvonne Webb.

They have come up with a new schedule for completing the project. This new schedule will allow the contractors sufficient time to work effectively and efficiently. That new schedule is the month of November. That means that in November they will be handing over the completed infrastructure of our brand new restaured and expanded Court House building. Once the building is complete there remains the matter of security, furnishing and the Plaza Willem de Zwijger. The Plaza has already been designed by the Monumental Office.

The restauration and expansion of the Court House project has a cost price of 11 million Aruban florins. The preparation of this project took as many as three years and the actual work is taking almost two years.



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Moody's upgrades ratings of AAA...

Continued from page 1

with the largest airline share not exceeding 16%, AAA's moderate debt load, solid debt service coverage ratio and strong liquidity position, providing financial and operational flexibility, supportive legal covenants and investor protection in the indenture, and finally the moderate capital program which likely will not require additional indebtedness in the near future.

In its announcement Moody's states that "the adjustment reflects the sustained

improvement in operational and financial metrics supported by increasing passenger traffic over the past few years. Enplanement levels have increased annually since 2009 and were minimally impacted by the financial global crisis."

AAA's CEO Peter Steinmetz comments "In economically turbulent times, as we have witnessed over the last couple of years, we have become accustomed to downgrading of banks, governments and other institutions. It

is therefore all the more remarkable that in that same era Aruba Airport Authority's bonds have been upgraded, squarely going against this current. We, at AAA, feel that our efforts to create a financially solid entity are paying off and are being recognized by the financial world. This creates a beneficial image of not only the company but also of the island as a whole."

For Moody's complete report please refer to www.moody.com

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TUESDAY AND FRIDAY: LIVE MUSIC

International News

Obama, Romney clash in spiteful White House race

WASHINGTON (AFP) - Seven spiteful months loom in a White House battle that may leave a polarized America even more divided and shred the winner's hopes of a genuine mandate to fix awaiting fiscal crises.

Wednesday marked the first day proper of the duel between Obama, seeking a second term hampered by a two-steps-forward, one-step-back economy, and a Republican bent on ending his historic presidency after just four years.

Romney won a test of endurance when Rick Santorum, the last challenger with a real chance of depriving him of the Republican nomination, quit on Tuesday.

The general election promises to be nasty, fueled by massive hauls of corporate cash, fought between two campaigns which love to go nega-

tive and between candidates with little incentive to run on checkered records.

The hope, change and history that powered Obama to the White House in 2008 is but a memory as a sarcastic president, worn down by three crisis-battered years, lashes out at the man who wants his job.

"There are contrasting visions here and this election will probably have the biggest contrast that we've seen maybe since (1964)," Obama said Tuesday.

Obama is gambling that Americans will buy his vision of an economy offering a "fair shot" for all, bankrolled by higher taxes on millionaires and hopes to divert attention from 8.2 percent unemployment.

Romney is running as an economic turnaround wizard, "a conservative businessman"

preaching lower taxes, less regulation and an end to a foreign policy of "appeasement" he sees as based on Obama apologies.

There is also a fundamental clash of political worldviews: between Obama who wants government to help build a new, nimble economy and Romney who thinks it should get out of the way and let the market work its magic.

Polls show more voters like Obama than Romney -- likability is a key barometer of US elections. Obama is well placed in national polls and swing states and leads Romney in a Washington Post/ABC News poll 51 to 44 percent among registered voters.

But the White House is haunted by fears Europe's debt crisis could harm the US rebound, worries that rising gas prices could turn voters against Obama, and fears about the political shock waves of any Israeli strike on Iran.

In the Post poll published Tuesday, Obama led Romney on who was best for the middle class, women, foreign policy and healthcare, but the rivals were close on economics.

But an intangible will be thrown into the race when the conservative majority Supreme Court decides whether to reject Obama's landmark health care reform, in a ruling expected in June.

Romney is disadvantaged by a painful primary which exposed his failure to fire up conservatives needed for a heavy Republican turnout on November 6.

He also showed a penchant for gaffes and alienated vital constituencies including Hispanics and women and his image as a wealthy venture capitalist proved a liability.

Thousands protest amnesty for Suriname leader

PARAMARIBO (AFP) - Thousands of Surinamese took to the streets Tuesday in protest at the amnesty granted to President Desi Bouterse, who had been accused of involvement in several political murders in 1982.

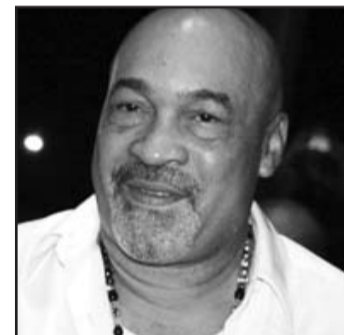
Demonstrators dressed in black and white, or sporting t-shirts bearing the faces of the victims, marched through downtown Paramaribo, singing "We shall overcome" and carrying placards. Some taped their mouths shut in protest.

"We all have the right to truth and no one can take this away from us. We have to realize that in a constitutional state, no one stands above the rule of law," said Yasser Riedewald, son of one of the victims.

Students, labor union activists, major religious organizations, human rights groups, media employees and opposition lawmakers joined the march.

Suriname's 51-member National Assembly approved the amnesty measure last week, bringing an end to the slow-moving trial of Bouterse and other military leaders for executing political opponents in 1982 during his dictatorship.

Bouterse had been accused of having been present on December 8, 1982, at the military barracks of Fort Zeelandia, the colonial fortress in the capital where the alleged killings of 13 civilians and two military officials occurred.



He had faced the possibility of up to 20 years in prison if convicted in the trial launched five years ago in the former Dutch colony.

Bouterse was elected president by parliament in 2010 but led a ruling military junta from 1980-1987, during the South American country's civil war.

The legislation -- which has been signed into law -- provides amnesty for Bouterse and his loyalists for all crimes committed between April 1, 1980 and August 19, 1992.

It also provides amnesty for the former military personnel who led the 1980 coup that propelled Bouterse to power.

The Netherlands, the former colonial power, convicted Bouterse on cocaine smuggling charges in 1999, but he has remained free as Suriname does not extradite its citizens. Interpol has signed an order for his arrest but he enjoys immunity as president.

Suriname gained its independence from the Netherlands in 1975, more than 300 years after first becoming a Dutch colony.



BANDA ACEH, Indonesia : Evacuated Acehnese residents are pictured at open ground in front of the historic Baiturrahman grand mosque in the capital Banda Aceh after a powerful earthquake hit the western coast of Sumatra in Aceh province yesterday. A tsunami watch around the Indian Ocean was lifted hours after the two massive earthquakes struck off Indonesia's Sumatra island, sending terrified people fleeing from the coast. The 8.6-magnitude quake hit 431 kilometres (268 miles) off the city of Banda Aceh, and was followed by another undersea quake measured at 8.2, the US Geological Survey said. The mosque survived the massive 2004 earthquake and tsunami which destroyed much of the rest of the city of Banda Aceh.
AFP PHOTO

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International News

G8 diplomats meet as Syria, N. Korea crises deepen

WASHINGTON (AFP) - US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton on Wednesday stressed the urgency of resolving security concerns about Syria, Iran and North Korea as she opened talks with Group of Eight (G8) foreign ministers.

Top diplomats from the United States, Russia, Canada, Italy and Japan gathered as Syria, despite continued regime attacks on rebels, promised to respect a today's ceasefire and North Korea moved closer to launching a long-range rocket.

Hinting she would again push Moscow to use its clout with Syrian President Bashar al-Assad to end the violence, Clinton has said she will meet with her Russian counterpart Sergei Lavrov on the margins of the two-day G8 meetings.

Like other G8 capitals, Moscow, a Syrian military ally, has backed the peace plan, but it puts far more

weight on the Syrian opposition halting 13 months of violence and has vetoed UN Security Council measures condemning Assad.

Under the Annan plan, Syria's armed forces were supposed to have withdrawn from protest centers on Tuesday, with a complete end to fighting set for 48 hours later.

Continuing to mount attacks, Syria announced Wednesday that it will cease military operations against rebel fighters from today, but Clinton has demanded deeds, not words from President Bashar al-Assad's regime.

The G8 foreign ministers will also discuss nuclear-armed North Korea's planned launch of a rocket which Pyongyang says is aimed at putting a satellite into orbit, but much of the rest of the world says is a disguised missile test.

Defying worldwide calls to back down, North Korea said

Wednesday it is fuelling a rocket for launch between April 12-16.

During a Tuesday press conference in Washington, Clinton and Japanese Foreign Minister Koichiro Gamba warned of "appropriate" action at the United Nations if the North goes ahead with the launch.

G8 members the United States, Russia and Japan are part of the troubled six-party nuclear disarmament talks which also involve South Korea, North Korea and China.

The ministers are also expected to discuss Iran's controversial nuclear ambitions ahead of weekend talks between Tehran on the one hand and the United States, Russia, China, Britain, France and Germany on the other hand.

All but China and Iran are G8 members.

Cuba: US locked in Cold War, blocks Havana from summit

HAVANA (AFP) - Communist Cuba criticized the United States for "aggressive" Cold War-style moves to block it from attending the Summit of the Americas which meets in Colombia this week.

The US government vetoed proposals to include Cuba, the Americas' only Communist country, among invited leaders to the summit in Cartagena, Colombia.

"The veto, once again, by US authorities clearly demonstrates that Washington has no real desire to get closer to its southern neighbors, nor to change its aggressive policy against our country," an editorial in the official Cuban Communist Party newspaper Granma said.

Washington's refusal to allow Cuban participation "evokes the classic language of the Cold War to demonstrate that the (purported) policy of the (Barack) Obama administration on change in policy toward Cuba does not go beyond rhetoric," the editorial stressed.

At the previous Summit of the Americas in Trinidad and Tobago in April 2009, Obama said he was willing to seek "a new beginning with Cuba" that would include improved relations.

But the dialogue starts with a non-starter. The United States wants Cuba to allow a multi-party political system, which Havana flatly rules out.

The Granma editorial Tuesday said, "Nothing has

changed about the essence of the hostile policy of the United States toward our country."

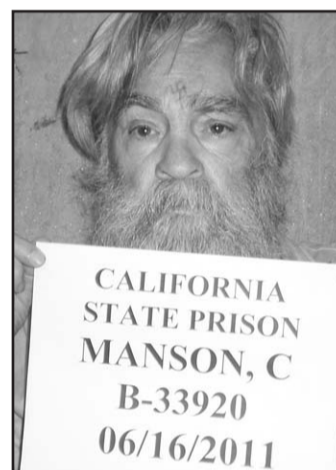
The newspaper rejected the argument that Cuba's exclusion from the summit is due to its non-membership in the Organization of American States (OAS), from which Cuba was expelled in 1962.

The Summit of the Americas is a regular meeting sponsored by the Organization of American States.

The United States has had a full economic embargo locked on Havana since 1961. The United States also gives immediate residency to any Cuban who reaches US soil, something it does not do for natives of any other communist country.

The summit of the Americas is in Cartagena, April 14-15.

Serial killer Manson refused parole, again



LOS ANGELES (AFP) - Infamous US mass murderer Charles Manson (77) was refused parole Wednesday, officials said, in what could be his last review for release after more than 40 years behind bars.

"It was Manson's 12th parole suitability hearing conducted by a BPH panel.

The reason for his ineligibility until 2027 -- when he would be 92 years old, if still alive -- was not clear, although reports suggest it is due to a change in the law. A CDCR spokesman was not immediately available to explain.

He still bears a tattoo of a swastika emblazoned on his forehead.

One of the United States' most notorious inmates, Manson is incarcerated at Corcoran state prison, he was denied parole for the 11th time.

Manson headed an apocalyptic cult and hatched a plot to commit murders in upscale,

mostly white neighborhoods of Los Angeles and then blame the crimes on African-Americans, in hopes of sparking a race war.

He was sentenced to death with four of his disciples for having led an August 1969 killing of seven people, including Sharon Tate, the wife of filmmaker Roman Polanski. Tate was eight and a half months pregnant.

Death sentences that were handed down for crimes accompanied by acts of barbarism were commuted to life in prison after executions were halted by California in 1972.

One of Manson's disciples, Leslie Van Houten -- convicted in the 1969 killings of Leno and Rosemary LaBianca in their Los Angeles home -- was denied parole in 2010.

Another follower, Susan Atkins, died of cancer in prison in 2009. She had mounted over a dozen bids for parole in nearly four decades of incarceration and repeatedly apologized for being part of the brutal crime spree.

Manson "family" member Lynette "Squeaky" Fromme was released from prison in 2009 after serving 34 years for the attempted assassination of US president Gerald Ford.

She did not participate in the 1969 killings, and said she threatened Ford because she wanted to draw attention to environmental issues but had no intention of actually killing him.

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Dementia cases to double by 2030: WHO

GENEVA (AFP) - The number of people with dementia is expected to almost double to 65.7 million by 2030 as the world population ages, according to a World Health Organisation report published Wednesday.

And by 2050 the number of sufferers could be more than three times the current figure of 35.6 million, the UN body said.

The report released by WHO and Alzheimer's Disease International estimates

the current cost of treating and caring for those with the condition at \$604 billion (461 billion euros) a year.

Dementia is caused by a variety of brain illnesses that affect memory, thinking, behaviour and the ability to perform everyday activities.

Alzheimer's disease is the most common cause of dementia and accounts for about 70 percent of cases.

More than half of sufferers (58%) live in low and middle income countries but this

could rise to 70 percent by 2050.

The report said far more effective diagnosis was needed, as even in high income countries only 20 to 50 percent of dementia cases are routinely recognised.

"Since we know the prevalence of the disease will explode in this century as we all live longer -- the risk of dementia is 1 in 8 for those over 65 and a shocking 1 in 2.5 for those over 85 -- its impact will become greater as the decades

go by," according to Shekhar Saxena, head of the mental health department at WHO.

Only eight countries worldwide -- Australia, Britain, Denmark, France, Japan, South Korea, the Netherlands and Norway -- currently have national programmes in place to address dementia, according to the report "Dementia: a public health priority".

Germany and Sweden have set out lists of recommendations.

The study also highlights a

general lack of information and understanding about the disease, fuelling stigma with the result that people sometimes delay seeking support.

In its report, the WHO recommends that authorities seek to reduce the stigma that has long been associated with dementia, and improve general care for victims, along with support for caregivers.

It is currently not possible to treat dementia, but progress of the disease can in some cases be slowed down.



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Sci-Tech

US sues Apple, publishers yield on e-book pricing

WASHINGTON (AFP) - The US Justice Department sued Apple and five publishing houses alleging a "conspiracy" to raise prices and limit competition for e-books, and immediately reached a partial settlement in the case.

As the antitrust suit was announced, officials said three of the publishers agreed to end the scheme to force retailers such as Amazon to accept a new pricing plan that limited their ability to offer discounts for electronic books.

Hachette Book Group, HarperCollins and Simon & Schuster reached the settlement but the case will proceed against Apple and the other two -- Macmillan and Penguin Group -- "for conspiring to end e-book retailers' freedom to compete on price," the Justice Department said.

"As a result of this alleged conspiracy, we believe that consumers paid millions of dollars more for some of the most popular titles," Attorney General Eric Holder said in announcing the lawsuit and partial settlement.

"We allege that executives at the highest levels of these companies -- concerned that e-book sellers had reduced prices -- worked together to eliminate competition among stores selling e-books, ultimately increasing prices for consumers."

Sharis Pozen, head of the Justice Department's antitrust division, said the conspiracy was aimed at ending a discounting effort by Amazon, which sold e-books at \$9.99 until the publishers forced the new pricing plan on them.

She said the executives in the conspiracy "knew full well what they were doing. That is, taking steps to make sure the prices consumers paid for e-

books were higher."

The move almost instantly raised the prices consumers paid for e-books, the official said.

"When assertions came to light that over a three-day period prices increased dramatically among publishers, you can imagine it took our notice and we investigated," Pozen told the news conference.

The settlement with the three, she added, "will begin to undo the harm caused by the companies' anticompetitive conduct, and will restore price competition so that consumers can pay lower prices for their e-books."

Apple spokesman Tom Neumayr declined to comment on the case.

The lawsuit comes amid probes on both sides of the Atlantic over the efforts to limit discounting on electronic books, which had been dominated by Amazon until Apple launched its iPad in 2010.

In Brussels, EU competition chief Joaquin Almunia said an offer to settle the probe had come from Apple and four publishers.

"We are currently engaged in fruitful discussions with them, without prejudice to the outcome of these talks," he said, adding that EU officials would assess the offer in a bid "to preserve competition for the benefit of consumers in this fast-growing market."

The suit filed in US District Court in New York said the conspiracy dating back to 2009 involved "schemes to limit Amazon's ability to discount e-books," hurting consumers by pushing up prices for electronic books.

The US lawsuit said the publishers "shared a common objective with Apple to limit e-book retail price competition."

Named in the suit along with Apple were CBS Corp.'s Simon & Schuster; Hachette Book Group, part of France's Lagardere; Pearson's Penguin Group; Macmillan, a unit of Verlagsgruppe Georg von Holtzbrinck; and HarperCollins, a unit of News Corp.

The lawsuit said the publishers conspired with Apple to end the longstanding "wholesale model" in which e-books were sold to retailers, which had the power to establish their own prices.

They replaced this with a so-called "agency model" where publishers would have

the power to set the prices retailers charge for the e-books. Under this arrangement, Apple was guaranteed a 30 percent commission on each e-book sold.

Prior to the introduction of Apple's iPad in April 2010, online retail giant Amazon, maker of the Kindle e-book reader, sold electronic versions of many new best sellers for \$9.99.

After the agency model was adopted, the prices rose to between \$12.99 and \$16.99, the suit said, and price competition among retailers was "unlawfully eliminated." Retailers

order to sell the e-books.

The suit seeks an injunction ordering a halt to the practices.

Macmillan chief executive John Sargent said his firm would fight the settlement because "the terms the DOJ demanded were too onerous."

"We came to the conclusion that the terms could have allowed Amazon to recover the monopoly position it had been building before our switch to the agency model," he said.

He added that the settlement "would have a very negative and long term impact on those who sell books for a living, from the largest chain stores to the smallest independents."

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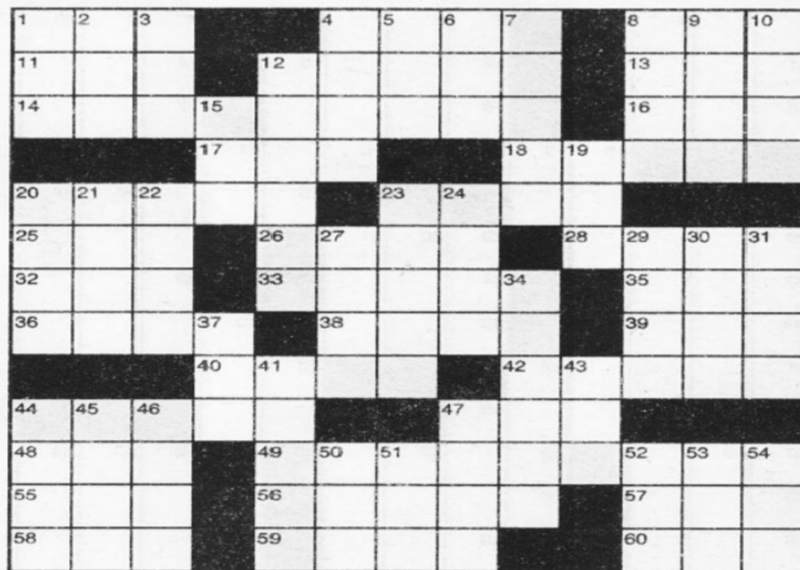


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ACROSS

- 1. Wedding response (2 wds.)
- 4. Mama's partner
- 8. Boxing result (abbr.)
- 11. Actor Cariou
- 12. Pointed (at)
- 13. Craving
- 14. Most important
- 16. Family ___ room
- 17. Used a match
- 18. Ridiculous
- 20. Sacred poem
- 23. "Dragnet" star
- 25. Stick up
- 26. Comet competitor
- 28. Rental abodes (abbr.)
- 32. Live and breathe
- 33. Absolutely furious
- 35. Clock numeral
- 36. Abominable Snowman
- 38. Parcel (out)
- 39. Word in MPH
- 40. Highlands maiden
- 42. Ed of the Reagan administration
- 44. Hammer and wrench
- 47. Month before Dec.
- 48. Brutally harsh
- 49. Schedule of arrivals and departures
- 55. "I Like ___"

- 56. Make a mistake disappear
 - 57. Take it on the ___
 - 58. WWII org.
 - 59. Tenant's burden
 - 60. Football scores (abbr.)
- DOWN**
- 1. ___ du Diable (Devil's Island)
 - 2. ___ Moines
 - 3. Switch positions
 - 4. One of Clooney's pals
 - 5. Friend (Fr.)
 - 6. ___ coat
 - 7. Talk off-the-cuff (hyph.)
 - 8. Supermodel Banks
 - 9. Eager
 - 10. ___ in a while
 - 12. Beast
 - 15. House addition
 - 19. Basketball gp.
 - 20. Beseech
 - 21. Bruised
 - 22. Help
 - 23. Whitecaps
 - 24. Door out
 - 27. Thorpe and Backus
 - 29. Meerschaum
 - 30. Binds
 - 31. Respectful title
 - 34. Make lower in rank
 - 37. Unhealthy
 - 41. Daisy's kin
 - 43. Green or Mendes
 - 44. Group of three
 - 45. Hardwood trees
 - 46. Has bills
 - 47. Treetop abode
 - 50. Vexation
 - 51. Fellow
 - 52. Lunch counter letters
 - 53. Chap
 - 54. Dorothy's aunt and others



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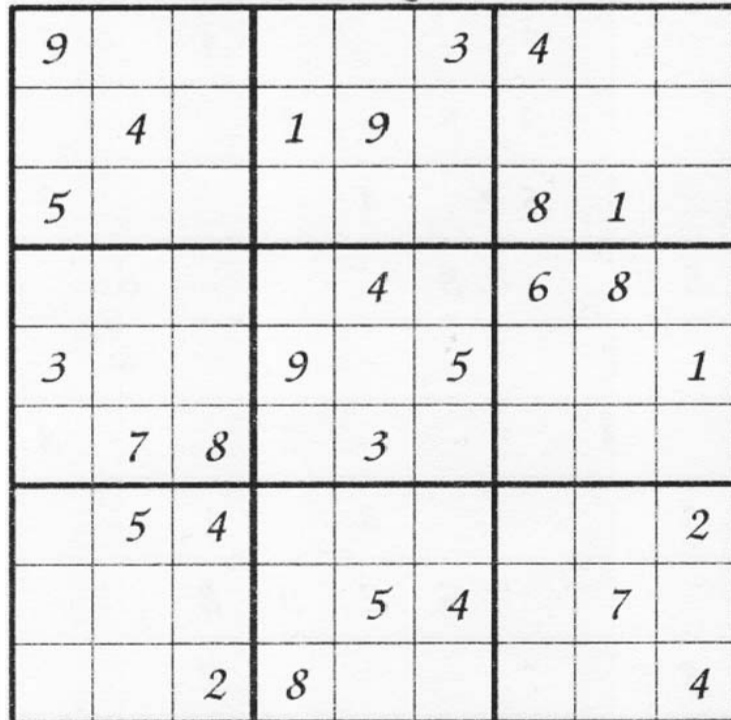
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Sudoku



SOLUTION

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8	L	E	P	S	2	6	I	9
2	9	1	6	L	E	P	S	8
S	6	2	1	E	9	8	L	P
I	P	L	S	8	6	9	2	E
E	8	9	2	P	L	S	6	I
6	I	8	L	2	P	E	9	S
9	E	S	8	6	I	L	P	2
L	2	P	E	9	S	I	8	6

Complete the grid so that every row and every column contains the numbers 1 through 9
A number is Never repeated in a row or column.
In addition every rectangle must contain the numbers 1 through 9




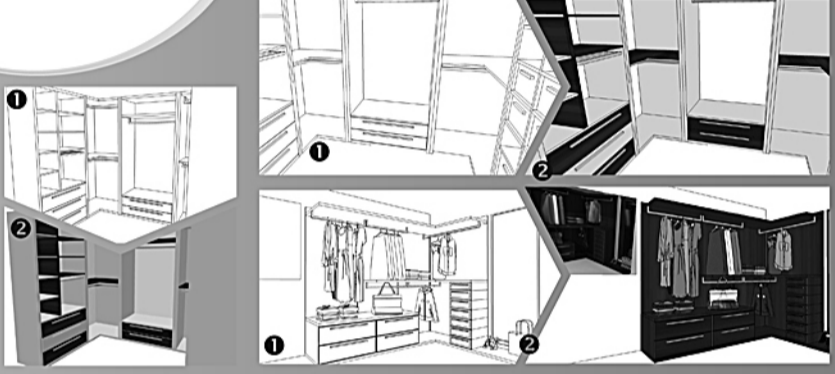
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Rita's Italian Ice Signs Area Franchise Developments in California & ABC Islands

TREVOSE, Pa. -- Rita's Italian Ice, the nation's largest Italian Ice concept with over 550 stores in 22 states, has signed a new area franchise development agreement for part of Los Angeles County, California, and an area franchisee development agreement for Aruba, Bonaire and Curacao also known as the ABC Islands. The company also announced Scott Schubiger has joined the company as Senior Vice President of Franchise Sales. Schubiger, a 20 plus year sales veteran, will manage worldwide franchise development for the popular growing chain.

in the mid-80s Fahrenheit, is the perfect place to open Rita's," says Joe DeAngelis area developer, along with his wife, Irene, of Rita's ABC Islands. "We are very proud to be the first to bring Rita's to the Caribbean." They plan to franchise and open four Rita's stores within three years with the first targeted to open in Aruba this October.

"With a renewed focus on growing the Rita's brand, we are proud to welcome our California and ABC Islands area franchisees," said Jonathan Fornaci, chief executive officer of Rita's. "Another new addition, and member of the senior leadership team, Scott Schubiger will enable us to expand Rita's brand to many more fans within the United States and abroad."

Rita's growth strategy is to add significant scale around the world. From inquiry to opening, Rita's seasoned executives provide an unparalleled level of support. Qualified franchisees benefit from a 28 year old brand which is a predictable, measurable and sustainable investment opportunity.

"The ABC's, the sunny Caribbean islands with an average temperature year-round

Rita's Franchise Company, headquartered in Trevoze, PA, is the largest Italian Ice concept in the nation, currently operating in 22 states with over 550 stores. The chain offers a variety of frozen treats including its famous Italian Ice, Old Fashioned Frozen Custard and layered Gelati as well as its signature Misto and Blendini creations.

Finance

Fed: Rising fuel costs cloud US economic outlook

WASHINGTON (AFP) - Higher gasoline prices are muddying what is an otherwise improving outlook for the US economy, the Federal Reserve said in a keenly watched report, published yesterday.

In its Beige Book survey -- which frames its policy meeting later this month -- the Fed held its cautious optimism about the economy but worried about the impact of fuel prices on consumer spending.

"The economy continued to expand at a modest to moderate pace from mid-February through late March," members of Fed regional branches reported.

"The near-term outlook for household spending was en-

couraging," they said, adding that several regions expressed concerns "that rising gas prices could limit discretionary spending in the months to come."

US gasoline prices have dropped in recent weeks, but are still three percent higher than this time last year and close to the politically sensitive four dollars a gallon mark.

According to the American Automobile Association, nationwide the average cost of a gallon (3.8 liters) yesterday was about \$3.92.

Manufacturing firms generally had the same overall view as the Fed: "Manufacturers in many districts expressed optimism about near-term growth prospects, but they are some-

what concerned about rising petroleum prices."

The Fed reported that hiring was "steady or showed a modest increase" across the country, while retail spending was up, thanks in part to unseasonably warm weather in many regions.

The residential housing market, long a drag on the recovery, also "showed some improvement."

But on the hard-hit west coast and in parts of the midwest "activity remained lackluster."

The Federal Reserve's top policy-making body will next meet April 24-25 in Washington, where they will face questions about whether the economy needs more help from the central bank.

Although the outlook has continued to improve, the pace of growth has been too slow and the recovery too weak for those advocating a fresh splash of Fed stimulus.

With interest rates already near the lowest level possible, the Fed has been pressed to increase its bond purchases to lower effective interest rates and nudge investors towards stocks, property, or other company spending.

YESTERDAY'S Crossword Answer

A	L	S	P	A	A	R	F
L	E	O	N	U	S	S	R
P	I	N	O	C	H	I	O
W	O	K	U	P	E	N	D
D	I	C	E	S	E	L	S
A	C	E	D	F	R	E	E
S	E	N	A	R	E	A	S
S	T	O	M	A	C	H	R
A	L	D	E	N	L	A	D
C	I	O	D	I	V	E	R
T	E	N	E	K	E	S	E
S	U	E	D	E	S	A	M

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Netherlands	EUR	231.75	233.87
Sweden	SEK	25.27	25.99
Denmark	DKK	30.48	31.20
Norway	NOK	29.79	30.51
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From Mexico to Brazil, LatAm bleeds from drug curse

SAN PEDRO SULA, (AFP) - Here in the most violent city in the world's deadliest country, gangs settle scores with grenades and AK-47s, hitmen strike in broad daylight and police demand extortion payments.

A homicide is reported every 74 minutes in Honduras, which has a population of eight million, and experts directly link the violence and corruption plaguing both the country and the region to drug trafficking.

Ninety percent of the cocaine sold in the United States passes through Central America, either en route to the US-Mexico border or destined to be smuggled by sea, according to US figures.

US General Douglas Fraser, head of the US Southern Command, however has said that only a third of the drugs that reach Central America and Mexico are stopped before entering the United States.

Leaders from the Americas -- who will head to Colombia for a regional summit this weekend -- are well aware of the drug violence that has become endemic, and are searching for new ways to control the scourge.

Cocaine, the illegal narcotic extracted from coca -- native to South America -- leaves a trail of destruction across the region.



Two armed men stand guard in a street of San Pedro Sula, 20 people die every day in San Pedro Sula, a rate ten times higher than the average in the world, making it known as the world's crime capital. AFP PHOTO

Honduras has a homicide rate of 86 per 100,000 people, according to a United Nations study, and San Pedro Sula -- located near the Atlantic coast and close to the border with Guatemala -- lies on a key drug trafficking route.

Security forces in Honduras, as in most of Latin America, are outmanned and outgunned by drug gangs, who move their shipments on private airplanes, speed boats, and even submersibles known as "narco-subs."

Honduras is not alone: in tiny El Salvador, there are 66 homicides per 100,000 residents, and in Guatemala, the rate is 41.4 per 100,000.

Some regional leaders are advocating the decriminaliza-

tion of drugs to dampen the violence.

The US government however opposes such a move, and recently sent Vice President Joe Biden to Central America to talk leaders out of the idea.

Washington has long funded anti-narcotics operations in Latin America, most notably through the Plan Colombia -- more than \$6 billion since 2000 -- and the \$1.6 billion Merida Initiative, signed in 2008, which covers Mexico and Central America.

Washington points to successes in the war on drugs, including the destruction of Colombia's powerful Medellin and Cali cartels.

But those relative victories did not stop the flow of drugs.

Today in Cali, small and mid-sized drug gangs thrive, and in the nearby Cauca valley, leftist guerrillas, right-wing paramilitary fighters and criminal gangs are all involved in the drugs trade.

Experts say the demise of the Colombian cartels only led to the growth of the Mexican syndicates.

In Mexico, more than 50,000 people have been killed since President Felipe Calderon launched a US-supported crackdown on drug trafficking in 2006. Most of those people were killed in turf wars among the competing cartels.

There have been important victories in Mexico, including high-level arrests and the crippling of the once-powerful Tijuana drug cartel.

But Mexico's other cartels appear as strong as ever -- so much so that the Zetas, founded by ex-anti-drug commandos, have formed alliances with Central American drug gangs like the Mara Salvatrucha, which extends its reach into Los Angeles and other major US cities.

Even more worrying is the fact that regional drug cartels, who sometimes pay their workers with cocaine, have broadened their market beyond the United States and Europe and are creating a whole new generation of ad-

dicts in Latin America.

In Brazil, which recently passed Britain to become the world's sixth biggest economy, poor youths addicted to crack cocaine fight for their fix in squalid shanty towns across the country.

While the homicide rate in Brazil is 26.2 per 100,000, in Maceio a northeastern city, it is 109.9 per 100,000.

"In seven years I lost five sons, killed by their own friends," said Severino Lopez, a 59-year-old candy vendor. "They bought drugs, did not pay their debts and died. The youngest was 18 and the oldest was 23."

"Cocaine consumption has generalized across nearly all of Latin America and the Caribbean," said Francisco Cumsille, who works in an Organization of American States office that monitors drug abuse.

"This is not a drug that is exported only to the north."

According to the group, half of the world's cocaine consumers live in the Western Hemisphere.

Surprisingly, drugs play only a small role in Venezuela, another Latin American country with a soaring homicide rate (67 per 100,000 residents). Most of those murders are linked to common crime and revenge attacks.

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Irish president leads Titanic tribute in departure port



A postcard issued after the sinking of the Titanic is shown on display at the Ulster Transport Museum in Belfast, Northern Ireland.

DUBLIN (AFP) - Ireland's commemoration for those who died in the sinking of the Titanic was led by the country's president on Wednesday in the southern town of Cobh, the last port of call for the doomed liner.

President Michael D Higgins said at a ceremony that having taken on the last passengers -- 123 Irish emigrants -- the Titanic departed 100 years ago to the day "over a grey horizon to meet with disaster".

Only 44 of those of who boarded the Titanic in Cobh survived. The dead included 11 who were part of a group of 14 young emigrants from a small village in the west of Ireland.

Higgins said the sinking occurred during Ireland's second wave of emigration to North America following a major exodus during what is known as the Great Famine of the 1840s that followed the failure of the potato crop.

"Between 1830 and 1914, it is estimated that five million Irish people left for North America, never to return."

Cobh in County Cork -- called Queenstown in 1912 when Britain still ruled Ireland -- is marking the tragedy with a special festival and week of events.

Higgins said the reasons for Irish people's fascination with the Titanic was not only empathy with the victims but also has to do with the sobering

wisdom painfully acquired from the hubris that characterized the story.

"We in our time have experienced the sense of crisis that occurs when something deemed unsinkable -- in our case a speculative economy -- is confounded not only by circumstance and error but by the hubris that accompanied belief in what proved to be an irrational version of the economic."

Ireland's so-called Celtic Tiger economy was slammed by the international financial crisis forcing the country to seek an 85 billion euro rescue from the International Monetary Fund and the European Union in November 2010.

Higgins described an Irish member of the Catholic Jesuit order, Father Frank Browne, who disembarked from the Titanic at Cobh, as one of the fortunate passengers.

"Initially booked on the Southampton to Queenstown leg of the journey, he was befriended on board by a wealthy American couple who offered to pay his full passage to New York."

"His request to his Provincial to continue on to America met with a terse telex response -- 'Get off that Ship' -- and this probably saved his life," Higgins said.

The Titanic sank on April 15, 1912, after striking an iceberg, with the death of around 1,500 passengers and crew.

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morning "Kaffie Klatch" and triple points when using their membership cards.



Cool Casino is a great place to learn to understand such table games as Craps and Roulette, as they offer free instructions and minimums for beginners with which anyone can have fun and feel very comfortable. High-stakes tables and a major weekly blackjack tournament will

keep veteran high-rollers happy, as well as periodic special events that attract an international crowd; stop by and check their schedule.

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Football: Del Piero sends Juve back top



Lazio's midfielder Stefano Mauri (L) fights for the ball with Juventus' defender Leonardo Bonucci.

ROME (AFP) - Alessandro Del Piero rolled back the years with a peach of a goal to hand Juventus a 2-1 win over Lazio on Wednesday and keep the Turin giants top of Serie A.

The pressure was on following AC Milan's laboured 1-0 win at Chievo the night before but Juve responded with a crucial, late victory to go one point clear at the summit.

Simone Pepe had given the hosts a first half lead before Stefano Mauri equalised with Lazio's only meaningful attack of the game.

But veteran Del Piero proved the hero with a trademark free-kick.

The first half was about as one-sided as 45 minutes of football can be but Lazio somehow sneaked into the break on level terms.

Fabio Quagliarella should

have opened the scoring early but he failed to turn home Giorgio Chiellini's cross from six yards.

Marchetti was then deceived by a bounce but Quagliarella's shot hit him in the face and rebounded to safety.

Juve were in total control and Arturo Vidal played Pepe in behind the backline but Marchetti saved low to his right.

The pressure told on the half hour mark as Andrea Pirlo's delightful chip sent Pepe clear and with his back to goal he controlled the ball on his chest and then sent an acrobatic overhead bicycle kick past the goalkeeper.

Vidal tried his luck from 60 yards, spotting Marchetti off his line, but the goalkeeper scrambled back to tip the ball over.

Modibo Diakite then dived

in to block what seemed a certain goal for Mirko Vucinic before Marchetti stuck out his left hand to stop Quagliarella's deviated shot.

But then right on the stroke of half-time, Lazio took a quick free-kick and Mauri headed Lionel Scaloni's pinpoint cross into the top corner.

Juventus were straight back on the attack after the break but although Vucinic beat Marchetti, his shot fizzed past the post.

Chiellini had a glorious chance when set up by Stephan Lichsteiner but the big defender didn't have quick enough feet to turn the ball goalwards.

But eight minutes from time Del Piero wrong-footed Marchetti, who seemed unsuspected, with a free-kick from 25 yards out to send the home fans into ecstasy.

In other games Inter Milan boosted their European qualification hopes with a 2-1 win over Siena to maintain coach Andrea Stramaccioni's unbeaten start as boss.

Diego Milito scored a brace to move up to third in the Serie A scoring charts following Gaetano D'Agostino's opener.

Inter are now behind Napoli in the final Europa League spot only on head-to-head record after Walter Mazzarri's men fell 3-1 at home to Atalanta.

Roma beat Udinese 3-1 thanks to late goals from Francesco Totti and Marquinho to boost their Champions

League hopes.

They now trail third-placed Lazio by four points in that race with Udinese a point ahead of them.

Lecce continued their un-

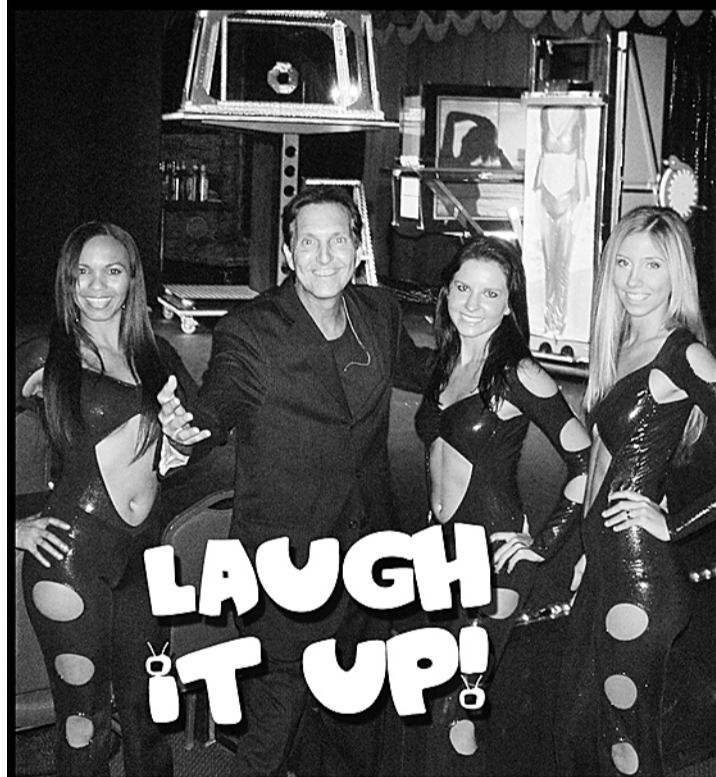
likely bid to escape the drop as they scored twice in the final two minutes to win 2-1 at Catania, although they are still two points from safety despite being unbeaten in their last five.

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Football: Abidal 'improving' after liver transplant - Barca

BARCELONA (AFP) - Barcelona's French defender Eric Abidal is "improving" in hospital, the club's president Sandro Rosell said Wednesday, a day after the player underwent a liver transplant operation.

The 32-year-old player received part of his cousin Gerard's liver at a Barcelona hospital in a lengthy procedure reportedly lasting nine hours on Tuesday.

Barcelona announced on March 15 that Abidal needed a

liver transplant "in the coming weeks", nearly a year after he had a tumour removed from the same organ.

Barcelona midfielder Sergio Busquets said at a post-training press conference on Wednesday that all Abidal's colleagues wished him well.

Abidal received a moving tribute from the fans at Barca's 4-0 victory over Getafe on Tuesday when, in the 22nd minute -- the same number as his squad shirt, they held up signs that read "Courage

Abidal, see you in Munich".

The German city will host the final of the Champions League on May 17. Barcelona are in the semi-finals of the competition and face English Premier League side Chelsea next week.

The club did not give any indication of how long he would be out of action but experts say recovery from a transplant may take up to six months and there was always the risk that the body could reject the new organ.

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Golf: Woods to return to Quail Hollow



CHARLOTTE (AFP) - Tiger Woods will try to bounce back from a disappointing Masters at the US PGA Tour's Wells Fargo Championship at Quail Hollow May 3-6, organizers said Wednesday.

Woods won the tournament in 2007, but didn't play there last year as he recovered from leg injuries.

The last time Woods

played at Quail Hollow was in 2010, when he posted the highest 36-hole total of his career, 153, and missed the cut.

Woods is enduring an up-and-down 2012 season. He withdrew in the final round at Doral with a sore Achilles tendon, then won at Bay Hill to claim his first PGA Tour title in more than two years.

That victory sent him into the Masters on a high, but he finished tied for 40th at Augusta National.

Woods has also committed to playing The Players Championship the week after Quail Hollow.

First, however, he said on his website Wednesday that he would take a brief break.

"I'm going to take some time off and not look at the clubs for a while, and then get back after it," Woods said, adding that he would then get down to work with coach Sean Foley.

Woods also acknowledged that he was wrong to let his frustration at Augusta boil over. He came in for some sharp criticism after kicking his nine-iron after an errant tee shot at 16 in the second round.

"One thing I would like to say about the Masters last week is that obviously I got frustrated at times and know some of my actions were wrong, especially at No. 16," he said.

"The Masters means a lot to me, and I was trying as hard as I could. I'm out there competing. I grind every day, and my expectations are to do my best. It's very disappointing when that doesn't happen."

Masters champion Bubba Watson is also slated to play Quail Hollow, along with fellow top 10 players Rory McIlroy, Lee Westwood and Hunter Mahan.

NBA: Pierce shines as Celtics douse Heat



LeBron James #6 of the Miami Heat fouls Paul Pierce #34 of the Boston Celtics

MIAMI (AFP) - Paul Pierce scored 27 points and Kevin Garnett added 24 on Tuesday as the Boston Celtics beat LeBron James and the Miami Heat 115-107, their second

victory over the Heat in less than a fortnight.

Garnett added nine rebounds and Rajon Rondo scored 18 points with 15 assists -- his 18th straight game

with double-digit assists -- as the Celtics backed up their 91-72 victory over the Heat on April 1.

While that victory depended on defence, it was offence that made the difference on Tuesday.

Brandon Bass added 12 points and 10 rebounds and Avery Bradley chipped in 11 points for the red-hot Celtics, whose 61 percent shooting was a season-high.

James finished with 36 points, seven rebounds and seven assists for the Heat. Dwyane Wade and Mario Chalmers had 18 apiece and Chris Bosh had 13.

Miami trailed much of the night, and when Bosh had a chance to tie the game at 89-89 when he was fouled on a scoring play he missed the free-throw.

The Celtics scored five of the next six points in the contest to take a 94-89 lead and quickly pushed their advantage back to double digits.

With Kevin Garnett continuing his late-career revival in his new role as a center by making four consecutive fourth-quarter jumpers, the Celtics held on after the Heat closed within 89-88.

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Football: Bayern star Breno to be prosecuted over house fire

BERLIN (AFP) - German prosecutors on Wednesday said they were to take action against Bayern Munich's Brazilian star Breno for allegedly setting fire to his own house last year.

"The public prosecutor's office in Munich has ended its investigation into the fire on September 20, 2011," it said in a statement, adding that it would "prosecute" Breno on charges of starting the blaze himself.

If found guilty, the 22-year-old defender could be jailed for a minimum of one year and a maximum of 15, prosecutors added.

Breno -- full name Breno Vinicius Rodrigues Borges -- has already spent two weeks in custody before being released on bail last October.

According to prosecutors, he was the only one in the luxury house in the Gruenewald superb of Munich at the time of the fire, which caused damage worth an estimated one million euros (\$1.3 million, £825,000).

They alleged that Breno was drunk and "probably" used "lighters and inflammable liquids and set fire... to several parts of the building".

Breno escaped the fire with slight smoke inhalation but was otherwise uninjured. His wife, their son and two other children from his previous relationship were not at the house at the time.

German media said that he had seen a doctor at a psychiatric clinic at the request of his club the day before he was questioned about the fire.

Breno underwent knee surgery on February 10 and has yet to make an appearance for Bayern this season having joined the Bavarian giants in 2008.

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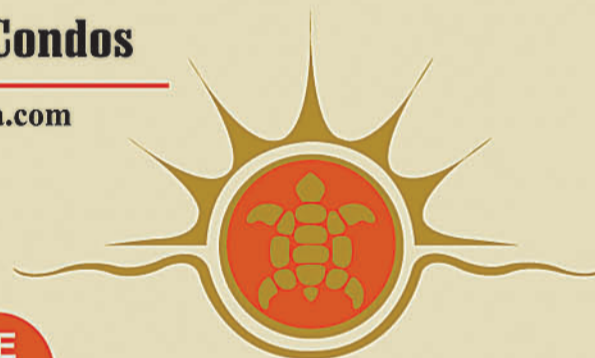


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Germany, Uruguay move up FIFA world rankings

(AFP) - Germany moved up to second in the latest FIFA world rankings published on Wednesday, with world champions Spain still in top spot and Uruguay moving up to third and their highest-ever position.

Germany and Uruguay's movement came at the expense of defeated World Cup finalists the Netherlands, who dropped to fourth and out of the top three for the first time since June 2010.

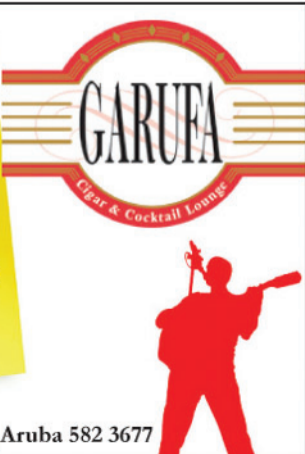
Portugal jumped two places to fifth, leapfrogging 2014 World Cup hosts Brazil who dropped one place, while Denmark's ninth place is their highest position since August 1997.

FIFA world rankings as of April 11:

1. Spain --
2. Germany +1
3. Uruguay +1
4. Netherlands -2
5. Portugal +2
6. Brazil -1

7. England -1
8. Croatia +2
9. Denmark +2
10. Argentina -2
11. Russia +1
12. Italy -3
13. Chile +1
14. Greece -1
15. Ivory Coast --
16. France --
17. Sweden --
18. Republic of Ireland +1
19. Switzerland --
20. Mexico +2

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